The Leader’s remarks in meeting with Iranian Army’s commanders and staff - 19 /Apr/ 2017

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

(Arabic prayer)

I congratulate you on this Eid (festive occasion); congratulate you on the Army Day; congratulate you on the New Year, [and also] congratulations to you and to your esteemed families, your children, [and] your spouses, on the occasion of Eid al-Mab’ath [marking Ordainment of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)], [which falls] on the 27th [day] of [the lunar month] of Rajab, and the birth anniversary of Imam Ali (PBUH), on the 13th of Rajab. Families and spouses are, in fact, fighting along you in difficult arenas of life, because one who is a soldier in the real sense of the word, his life is full of hardships and pressure and struggles and the likes of these. Your spouses and children, who empathize and cooperate with you under such conditions, are really your fellow soldiers and fellow combatants.
One of the best and smartest steps taken by our dear Imam [Khomeini] was to designate [a day as] the Army Day. This step strengthened the pillars of the Army, and caused the Army to run its roots deep in [this] land, [and] disappointed many conspirators and delusional people, who had other things on their mind. Designation of the Army Day by the Imam meant that the revolution and the Islamic Republic establishment accepted and supported the Army with this very identity and with this very composition.
Well, that identity was noteworthy from the viewpoint of social anthropology, anthropology and study of [the Army’s] organization. I mean, the body [of the Army] was Muslim and faithful, like the rest of people, but with an insecure top echelon possibly with cracks and pores within that organization; [the Army] was like this. The Imam, however, designated the Army Day in order to thwart any conspiracy targeting the Armed Forces and the Army of the Islamic Republic. He meant [to say] that I believe in this very Army with these characteristics and the Islamic establishment [also] believes in it. Now, I had talked in private about the characteristics of the Army with the Imam (May God’s Mercy Be Upon His Soul) scores of times [and] in scores of sessions – either one-on-one [meetings] or [meetings] attended by a few others – [and] I know that this was the heartfelt and profound thinking of the Imam that the Army must be supported, the Army must be maintained, [and] the Army must be strengthened, which fairly speaking, was a correct thought.
This very Army had a brilliant performance in all issues following the revolution. Now, [if] one wanted to explain some of those issues one by one, it would be difficult. For example, in the face of conspiracies hatched within the Army, the Army itself stood [against them] more than any other party; this is very important. There were – and still are – many people within organizations affiliated with the Islamic Republic establishment, who wanted to cause disruption [in the work of the establishment] from the inside. Well, their number was higher in those days; they both were more motivated [to do this], and made more effort [to this end]. They wanted to cause problems for the Army from within the Army;
I mean they wanted to give the Army an identity, which would be incompatible with the Islamic establishment; some people wanted to do this. The one party, who faced this motivation [and] this [effort to cause] disruption, and countered it more [seriously] than others, was the Army itself! No force outside of the Army – either an intelligence force or a military one – could have countered such a conspiracy against the Armed Forces; [but] the Army itself could do this [and] the Army itself did it. Now, this is just an example; there are many [other examples] like this.
Fairly speaking, the experience of the Army during the period of the Sacred Defense [the Iraqi imposed war against Iran], was a source of pride. I am telling you this, who have witnessed [those days] up-close. Most of you are young and have not seen those times –you were either not in the Army, [or] some of you had not been born [yet]. Well, I saw up-close; the Army played good roles and projected a good picture [of itself]. Now, apart from playing a role with regard to engaging in battle and combat and issues related to war, it also demonstrated some heartwarming

things as well. For instance, if I wanted to bring an example, some people in the Army showed that they held high ground in spiritual and moral terms; they demonstrated this in practice. Well, when it comes to mere talk, we all talk; [even] I, who talk so much about God and the Resurrection Day and Heaven and Hell, must be tested and examined in time of hardship to see how much I am really fearful of God, how considerate I am, [and] to what extent [I am afraid] of Hell. It is like this; [every person's true grit] must be seen in practice.

We have had, and still have, people within the Army, who have shown in practice that they are at high spiritual levels. One of them was this very [General Ali] Sayyad Shirazi, [and] another example was this very [Major General Abbas] Babaei. We are no short of such people; now, I named these famous and renowned figures, [but] we have many of this kind [in the Army]. I have seen examples of them up-close in [the city of] Ahvaz during the time I was there. I have frequently said this [story] that it was after midnight, [and] I was inspecting a brigade in Ahvaz – whose forces were no more than a battalion – [and I saw that] right beside a tank, the military man responsible for that tank was saying nocturnal prayers. Who would think [of doing this] in that desert, [and] in that cold weather? At midnight, [and] in the middle of winter, he stood right there and was saying nocturnal prayers.

At that time, these things that are commonly said now, [including] crying [in prayers] and Basiji youths and the likes of these were not norm of the day when I saw these [examples] up-close. I think he was a major or lieutenant colonel who came to me in a state of sorrow and close to breaking into tears, which I thought he would request me to give him leave of absence; [I thought] for example, that he is concerned and would ask for furlough to go to Ahvaz. He came to me and said, "Do something that every night, when these volunteer youths go out with Mr. [Mostafa] Chamran to, as they themselves say, hunt [Iraqi] tanks, I could go with them as well'. Can you imagine this? A senior Army officer – whose rank I don't remember now, assume that he was a lieutenant colonel [or] at a similar level – would come [to me] and volunteer to work with the Basiji youths, who were there from Tehran and wanted to go out at night and deal pinpoint blows to the enemy in the dark or by using the cover of darkness. This was common back then [and] it was like this at the start of war, and [there are many] other examples like this.

Well, the Army demonstrated its identity. I want to tell this to you: today, our Army is an intellectual Army, is a spiritual Army and is an Army with pure and sacred motivations; this is very valuable. [If] you look at military forces of many of these countries, [you see that] as if savagery and brutality and ruthlessness is part of their nature. [It is very valuable for] a military force, which is expected to act in those [brutal] ways, to train ethical people, good people, sublime characters, faithful youths, [and] pure motivations in its ranks [and in] various sections of the Army, which we are observing this today. In my opinion, this is one of the most important steps that the honorable Imam took by designating the Army Day. Well, my message to all members of the Army is to appreciate this state, [and] know the value of serving in this way. You are providing combat service within a combat organization, are actively present [in all arenas], [and] the Almighty God will record this as good deed for you and you are gaining spiritual reward. This is a very valuable thing, [and] you must appreciate this; [and] maintain this state. [Try to] boost your nonmaterial and spiritual preparedness and motivations of yourselves and your subordinates on a daily basis.

Security is very important for a country. Sometimes there is no food in a country, there is a famine and there exist problems, [and] insecurity prevails. If people were asked whether they wanted food or security, they would certainly prefer security; that is, the same thing that has been weakened in our region and many other regions due to interventions by superpowers. I mean [to get a grasp of insecurity], assume that a bus is moving from one place to another, but it is not certain that those who are onboard the bus would reach their destination safely and would not be attacked by the enemy; the same is true about [the situation on] streets, [and] in people's homes; these [issues] are important. Security is very important. The role that the Armed Forces play in creating security is an important role. The Army is possible to play no role with regard to security, but the more powerful and mightier you are, the mere might of the Army creates security in the country. The security of the country is provided by the Armed Forces and their might and their capabilities and their high motivation. This is among important issues.

My message to all members of the Army is that boost these capabilities as much as you can; anybody at whatever place they are [must try to do this]. Even a simple guard, who has [to man] a single guard-post, can be effective in boosting the strength of the Army. I mean, when he stands good guard, does not lose energy, and turns his sharp eyes toward where they must turn, this [person] is helping strengthen the armed organization to the same degree, whether it is the Army, or the IRGC (Islamic Revolution Guards Corps), or any other organization.

[This is about a simple guard and is true] all the way up to commanders, to manufacturers, to maintainers, to

warehouse operators, to producers, and to designers and strategy builders and the likes of these. All of these people can be effective in boosting a military organization. Therefore, you must appreciate this [and know] that every one of you taking any step in this direction, you would have done something to obtain the divine satisfaction and would have done a good deed.

And increase the number of those prominent people among you, who can be a role model; I mean everybody must strive [to achieve this goal]. That is, Martyr Babaei is really a role model; he is an ethical model not just a military one, [and] is a sacred person. Martyr Sayyad is also like this; and there are many others like these people, who have existed and been present in the Army, and one cannot remember some of their names and some of them we don't know at all. You must increase [the number of] these examples within this grand and esteemed organization, which is endowed with material and spiritual grandeur, on a daily basis.

Well, it was said that [the military] is like a safe fortress; they are the fortress of people. This point is important to know that the Armed Forces are not the sole fortress of people and the sole bastion of people, [but] the Armed Forces are among the most important bastions for security of people, and even this is [only possible] with permission of God; [as the saying goes,] "soldiers are bastion of people with permission of God." Various organs can accompany and collaborate with the Army in this regard; economic organs, cultural organs, educational organs, research organs; [and] entire country. This is what I expect from various organs. Everybody [must] try to act, work, [and] be active for their country and for their nation as a fortress and bastion [and] as an obstacle in the face of the enemy's assaults.[This is true] both [for] economic organs, and cultural organs, and scientific and research organs, and military organs; this must be everybody's goal. The tasks are diverse, but the goal is the same. Therefore, if the goal is to preserve and safeguard national security, national dignity, [and] the country's development and progress [as well as] protection of the country from the evil impact of enemies, then military organizations and academic organizations and research organizations and cultural organizations and economic organizations, all of them, constitute those humongous forces that are working together, help one another, complement one another, have no rivalry among them, [and] are not jealous of one another. [In this case,] such a [strong] solidarity is created in the country. This is what on which I stress.

I have highlighted economic mottos during these past couple of years, because I felt that the enemy wants to deal blows to this huge national complex through this sector. When we have economic problems, various sectors would not be able to do their job correctly. Therefore, we must see where is that sensitive and key point within the collection of duties that are shouldered by officials of the country, the administration, the three branches of government, and various organizations at the present time? [Note that] one point may be the key point at the present time, but another point could be the key in the future. At the present time, bolstering the economy in the country is a key point and enjoys priority. This is why I put [so much] emphasis on this [point], put emphasis on people's livelihood, put emphasis on the livelihood of civil servants in various state bodies, [and] put emphasis on livelihood of the staff of the Armed Forces. These issues must be followed up, and these [issues] must be followed up with diligence; [and] this is a task for officials. If officials look at the enemy's motivations, they would be more motivated to do this job. When we read or listen to what our enemies say, we see that they happen to put emphasis on this very point, so that, they would be able to take advantage of economic weaknesses and economic shortages to destroy [the country, and] to cause disruption [in the country's affairs]. Well, when one understands this, he would be more motivated in order to take this issue seriously.

The Economy of Resistance, which I brought up – and consists of a set of steps, [and] a set of moves and actions – contains a number of key points related to our present and near future, which include the issue of job creation and the issue of production. I have also explained these [issues] in detail to officials up-close and in private [meetings]. These [economic views] are not what I would say [on my own], because I am not an economist; this is what economic experts say, [and] this is what expert and prominent people, who are active in this field and advise me, say. I also look [at conditions] across the country and see that this is a priority. The enemy finds ways to meet its covetous desires. We must look to see what the enemy's motivation is, where that weak point is, through which the enemy may deal a blow to us, [and then] block it, [and] close it. This is what I expect from various officials in different sectors. This is why the issue of economy is among issues of foremost priority [for our country].

Of course, we have many strong points as well. In terms of quality and quantity, the strengths of the Islamic Republic establishment and the Iranian nation considerably outweigh the problematic points and points of weakness.

There are many amazing and numerous points of strength in us, which have helped the country and the Islamic establishment be able to hold its head high and stand with dignity and does not submit to enemies despite strange enmities which have been and will be shown toward it.
Look! The method used by superpower and [other] big [and] aggressive powers is browbeating; I have said this frequently. [They are] aggressive powers, who want to encroach upon all places and intervene in all places and nag all countries and define interests for themselves in all countries and if those interests are not met, would say that given government, that given country, [and] that given establishment has interfered with our interests. I mean, they define interests for themselves in any country [and] in any region without [having] any right, without [any] logic, [and] without a single correct argument; superpowers are like this. In order to be able to meet their interests and make governments in any region obey them, they magnify themselves, browbeat [other countries], [and] frown. You remember frowning by some previous American administrations. [They are doing it] in a different way now.
For any country, the worst state is when officials of that country are in fear of the enemy's frowning and threat and browbeating; if they are afraid [of the enemy], they have in fact held the door open for the enemy to enter and infiltrate and attack and invade [their country]. Every step must be taken through intellect and logic and wisdom, [and] there is no doubt about this, but it must also be taken bravely.
[Taking steps] with fear, with apprehension, with being influenced by browbeating and bad temper and frowning of the powerful [countries] that sway power in the world, [and] by being influenced by them is the beginning of all woes. Well, if somebody [among officials] wants to be afraid [of the enemy], [they can] be afraid, but must not be afraid on behalf of people, [and] as people's representative. The nation is standing [fast]. If the nation had not stood fast [we would have many problems, because] since the [Iranian] year 1357 (1979) up to the present time, which is about 40 years, all kinds and sort of plots have been used against us and money has been spent and weapons have been produced and threat and politics and the likes of these [have been employed against us]. If the Islamic Republic was to be in awe of these [issues], be afraid [and] backtrack [on its positions] no sign and effect of Iran and Iranian would have remained [by now]. The enemy – whether America or bigger than America – cannot do a damn thing in the face of an establishment, which is connected to its people, which loves its people and its nation, and is loved by its people, [and] in the face of such an establishment and such people, who are resistant against the enemy.
Of course, there is no doubt about hostility of these [enemies,] [and there is no doubt about the fact that] they make plans, think, show hostility, [and] activate their various organs [against us]. These enmities have been there during this almost forty years. Any government that has been in office [in the United States] has shown these enmities [towards Iran]. It is not [like that we could say] they agree with that given person, are opposed to that given person, [or] have considerations about that given person; no [this is not true]. These enmities existed in time of the Imam (May God's Mercy Be Upon His Soul), [and] after passing of the Imam, when I was given the responsibility, the same enmities exited [and] have continued up to the present day. Various [US] administrations with various [political] tastes [and] various tendencies came to office [and] went away, and under all these conditions, these enmities existed.
The main factor, which has been able to block these enmities, has been the might of the Iranian nation, steadfastness of the Iranian nation, [and the fact] that superpower-like browbeating of America and the likes of America and some of the European countries and the likes of these has had no effect on the Iranian nation. This must continue and if this is going to continue – of course this state, this spirit, [and] this might must continue [to exit] – an important part of it is your responsibility, who are the Islamic Republic's Army. Another large part of it is related to economic experts, a large part of it is related to elements [active] in the field of culture and education and the likes of them, [and] a very important part is related to those, who are in charge of scientific and research projects and [are responsible for promotion of] science and [ensuring] scientific progress [of the country] and the likes of them in the country. Everybody must join hands, [and] the Almighty God will also help, just in the same way that He has helped so far.
May God's mercy be upon our dear martyrs. The families of some of the dear martyrs of the Army are present here today. We will never forget these martyrs; the Iranian nation will never forget martyrs and the dear people of Iran, [and] the great nation of Iran will continue its activities with the spirit of respect for martyrs and inclination toward martyrs.
Well, praise be to God, the election race has somehow gotten underway as well. Of course, we have not reached the

main part of the elections yet, but preliminary stages of elections have already begun. Elections are among the honors of the Iranian nation. These elections are cause of dignity and honor and prestige for the Iranian nation before other nations in the world. All ill-wishers and enemies of Islam were trying to show that religion and Islam and spirituality were the opposites of democracy. [However,] The Islamic Republic showed that no, [this is not correct, because] we have something we call “Islamic democracy.” It is democracy while being Islamic and these two cannot be separated. These elections are a symbol of this: Islamic democracy. It is a cause of honor, a cause of prestige, a cause of dignity, [and] a cause of power. The nation also believes through elections that they hold the key to the country’s affairs in their hands. They feel that it is they, who can determine the main elements of the country; this is very important.

Of course, there is still some time left up to the election day and if I were alive, I would make remarks [in this regard] on other occasions [as well]. [However,] what I want to say today is this: everybody must appreciate elections; state officials [must] appreciate, election candidates must appreciate, people must appreciate, [and] officials holding elections must appreciate [elections]; [in short, everybody] must appreciate elections. Let’s venerate elections. Elections must be held in a healthy manner, with security, with wholesomeness and through high turnout [of Iranian voters]. If this happens, which, God willing and through the divine assistance, this will take place despite [plots hatched] by enemies, who continuously tempt [people], [and] keep whispering [against elections, then it will greatly benefit the country]. Those who follow these foreign radios and foreign media, and today, the radio has been dwarfed by extensive reach of other media, know that how enemies are tempting [people] to somehow undermine elections and [we hope that] the Iranian nation will, God willing, continue moving ahead with this very awakening and this very vigilance, it has always shown in the face of this hostile move, and an overarching, vibrant, enthusiastic and healthy elections combined with security would, God willing, take place. This will be a reserve for the country and this, per se, will greatly immunize the country, and I hope this would, God willing, take place.

Peace be unto you and so may the mercy of Allah and His blessings